



Expanding from Conventional Food Processing to Organic

As many food companies expand into the organic industry, either as a co-packer or a manufacturer / marketer, there are a variety of issues that need to be addressed.

FF & C Formulation, Facilities & Certification

Overview:

As a food processor / handler, the USDA has a web site that addresses your needs:

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/ProdHandlers/ProdHandhome.html> .

Formulation:

Organic foods are regulated by the USDA under 7 CFR Part 205. The USDA has established a list of ingredients that are not allowed. The list is available at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/NOP/standards/ListReg.html> . Many ingredient suppliers / brokers or consultants can help you locate allowable organic ingredients that possess similar functionality to their conventional ingredient counterparts. The USDA has set up a Question / Answer list at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/Q&A>

Facilities:

As a “handler” of organic ingredients / foods this information applies on the issue of co-mingling of ingredients (see the last section of this list):

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/FactSheets/ProdHandE.html>

Certification:

The USDA has established approximately 100 Organic Certifiers (domestic and international). The list of Accredited Certifiers is at:

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/CertifyingAgents/Accredited.html>. There is a list of Questions / Answers on certification at:

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/Q&A.html#Certification> and the text for the certification process is at:

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/NOP/standards/CertReg.html>

Summary:

RIBUS has been interested in having its ingredients “Certified Organic” for the past 4-5 years. It was just this year that we found sources of “Certified Organic” rice bran from which to make our ingredients. From the time that we started the process, engaging a consultant, and learning that our co-packer was already “Certified Organic”, the process took about 4-6 months. Utilization of a consultant proved to be a very beneficial step for RIBUS. Good luck in your expansion and if we can be of any further assistance, please let us know.